Public expenditure on health

1532. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country's public expenditure on health is one of the lowest in the world, as per the report of the Social Watch;

(b) whether as per the WHO only 0.49 per cent of the population has access to essential drugs, while Pakistan and Bangladesh are better placed; and

(c) whether the budgetary allocation for 2002-03 offered no provisions for reviving the public health system despite the National Health Policy of 2002?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Public expenditure in India is low but better than some of the Asian countries.

(b) As per WHO estimates, which are presently under validation by the Member States, 0-49% of the population and not 0.49% have access to essential drugs in India as against 50-79% in Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, according to UNDP Human Development Report, 2003, India which is placed at Position 127, in terms of the ranking done on the basis of Human Development Index is ahead when compared to Bangladesh (Position 139) and Pakistan (Position 144).

(c) Funds are being provided under Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana for improving the functional status of rural primary health- care institution. This a Additional Central Assistance is primarily meant for procurement of drugs as also for strengthening, repair and maintenance of infrastructure in rural areas which is in line with the policy prescription as contained in the National Health Policy-2002.